

know how to manage it best. He understands that while people here in Washington may care deeply about the land, it's the people that's closest to the land that we're going to rely upon to manage those resources. We're going to work closely with local and State leaders to ensure our natural resources are managed wisely.

Dirk takes up his new responsibilities at an important time in our Nation's history, and he follows an outstanding Secretary of the Interior in Gale Norton. Gale was instrumental in establishing the Healthy Forests Initiative to safeguard our forests and woodlands against fire damage. And thanks to her leadership, our administration has reduced the danger of fires by treating or removing hazardous fields from 11 million acres of Federal land so far. Gale also led the effort in Washington to improve our national parks and reduce the park maintenance backlog that we found when we came into office. Dirk is going to continue focusing on our national parks.

After Hurricane Katrina devastated our Nation's gulf coast, Gale helped lead the effort to restore offshore energy production. She worked tirelessly to prevent a massive energy disruption that could have crippled our economy. America is a better place because of Gale Norton's leadership.

Dirk Kempthorne is going to build upon the strong foundation left by Gale Norton. He's going to continue my administration's effort to conserve our land and water and air resources. He's going to work to improve our national parks. He's going to preserve our Nation's historic and cultural sites. He'll carry forward our approach of cooperative conservation by encouraging conservation on both public and private lands in close collaboration with local communities. As we work to reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy, he will make sure that any exploration on Federal lands and in Federal waters is done in an environmentally sensitive way. As the Secretary of the Interior, Dirk Kempthorne will make certain that our Nation's natural spaces are cleaner and safer and more productive.

I want to thank Dirk for agreeing to serve our country again. I want to thank his family for supporting him. And now it's my honor

to witness the swearing-in of Dirk Kempthorne.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Justice Antonin Scalia and Secretary Kempthorne.

Statement on Senate Action on Marriage Protection Legislation

June 7, 2006

Today's Senate vote on the marriage protection amendment marks the start of a new chapter in this important national debate. I thank the Senators who supported this amendment, but I am disappointed the Senate did not achieve the necessary number of votes to move the amendment process forward. Our Nation's founders set a high bar for amending our Constitution, and history has shown us that it can take several tries before an amendment builds the two-thirds support it needs in both houses of Congress. My position on this issue is clear: Marriage is the most fundamental institution of our society, and it should not be redefined by activist judges. The people must be heard on this issue. And as this debate continues, each American deserves to be treated with tolerance, respect, and dignity.

NOTE: The statement referred to S.J. Res. 1.

Statement on Congressional Action on the "Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act"

June 7, 2006

I applaud the Congress for passing S. 193, the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act. I believe that Government has a responsibility to help strengthen families. This legislation will make television and radio more family friendly by allowing the FCC to impose stiffer fines on broadcasters who air obscene or indecent programming. I look forward to signing this important legislation into law.

Statement on Congressional Action on Mine Safety Legislation

June 7, 2006

I am pleased that the Congress has acted in a bipartisan way to pass important mine safety legislation. This legislation will complement the Mine Safety and Health Administration's efforts to enhance mine safety training, improve safety and communications technology, and provide emergency caches of breathable air for miners. The bill also increases penalties for those who violate mine safety laws. America's miners and their families can be confident that their Government is committed to taking measures that will help prevent accidents and save lives. I look forward to signing this bill into law.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 2803.

Remarks on the Death of Senior Al Qaida Associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi

June 8, 2006

Good morning. Last night in Iraq, United States military forces killed the terrorist Al Zarqawi. At 6:15 Baghdad time, special operation forces, acting on tips and intelligence from Iraqis, confirmed Zarqawi's location and delivered justice to the most wanted terrorist in Iraq.

Zarqawi was the operational commander of the terrorist movement in Iraq. He led a campaign of car bombings, assassinations, and suicide attacks that has taken the lives of many American forces and thousands of innocent Iraqis. Usama bin Laden called this Jordanian terrorist "the prince of Al Qaida in Iraq." He called on the terrorists around the world to listen to him and obey him. Zarqawi personally beheaded American hostages and other civilians in Iraq. He masterminded the destruction of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad. He was responsible for the assassination of an American diplomat in Jordan and the bombing of a hotel in Amman.

Through his every action, he sought to defeat America and our coalition partners and turn Iraq into a safe haven from which Al

Qaida could wage its war on free nations. To achieve these ends, he worked to divide Iraqis and incite civil war. And only last week, he released an audio tape attacking Iraq's elected leaders and denouncing those advocating the end of sectarianism.

Now Zarqawi has met his end, and this violent man will never murder again. Iraqis can be justly proud of their new Government and its early steps to improve their security. And Americans can be enormously proud of the men and women of our Armed Forces, who worked tirelessly with their Iraqi counterparts to track down this brutal terrorist and to put him out of business.

The operation against Zarqawi was conducted with courage and professionalism by the finest military in the world. Coalition and Iraqi forces persevered through years of near misses and false leads, and they never gave up. Last night their persistence and determination were rewarded. On behalf of all Americans, I congratulate our troops on this remarkable achievement.

Zarqawi is dead, but the difficult and necessary mission in Iraq continues. We can expect the terrorists and insurgents to carry on without him. We can expect the sectarian violence to continue. Yet the ideology of terror has lost one of its most visible and aggressive leaders.

Zarqawi's death is a severe blow to Al Qaida. It's a victory in the global war on terror, and it is an opportunity for Iraq's new Government to turn the tide of this struggle. Two minutes ago, I spoke to Prime Minister Maliki. I congratulated him on close collaboration between coalition and Iraqi forces that helped make this day possible. Iraq's freely elected Prime Minister is determined to defeat our common enemies and bring security and the rule of law to all his people.

Earlier this morning, he announced the completion of his Cabinet appointments with the naming of a new Minister of Defense, a new Minister of the Interior, and a new Minister of State for National Security. These new ministers are part of a democratic government that represents all Iraqis. They will play a vital role as the Iraqi Government addresses its top priorities—reconciliation and reconstruction and putting an end to the kidnappings and beheadings and suicide